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MARGAZHI KUTCHERI - UNESCO RECOGNIZED MUSIC FEST

CASE STUDY/INSIGHT

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'Margazhi Kutcheri' refers to the concerts of Carnatic music happening during the Tamil month of 'Margazhi' that falls from mid of December to mid of January. This is the season for music celebrated in Chennai. This music concert is a part of Chennai's identity. The Chennai Margazhi Kutcheri has been included in the 'UNESCO Creative Cities' for its rich musical tradition. During 2019 Margazhi season alone, there were more than 3500 concerts happening in Chennai.

There are many great Carnatic Musicians from Tamil Nadu like M.S Subulakshmi, M.L. Vasanthakumari, D.K. Pattamal, T. Brinda, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Madurai Mani Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, G.N. Balasubramaniam, Flute N.Ramani, Lalgudi Jayaraman, M.S. Gopalakrishnan and many more. All their contribution to music has made the city's music to get recognized globally.

It is a grand event attracting people not just from the city but from across the world. Besides music, it is also the season for dance, dramas, any related talent shows, festivals such as Olcott Kuppam Festival and festival of food. Popular cooks will be hired and food stalls serving delicious food will be arranged near the concert halls to bring alive the taste buds of music listeners. It is also the time of silk sarees and matching jewellerys to be worn by women who go for such kutcheris. The whole of Chennai will appear colourful and geared up with festive feel all time.



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There are many people who come to exclusively visit these food stalls and satiate their taste buds. The Ooroor Olcott Kuppam festival is organized to take arts to the common man. It happens in the Ooroor Olcott Kuppam, a centuries-old fishing village in south Chennai. This festival provides an opportunity for the residents of fishing hamlet to get attention to their stories and enjoy performances.

During this Marghazhi season, a lot of people, native and foreigners from abroad like United States, United Kingdom, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries visit Chennai especially for attending the music concert. Hotels and guest houses in and around Chennai gets booked up during this season and there are people who book hotels in advance for the next year also. Autos, Car taxis and cab will have a large of customers and will economically benefit. Canteens and cafeterias during season will have huge profits and they have been introducing our traditional food and sweets in their menu, which gets good reception from the customers.

The 'Margazhi Kutcheri' or the 'December Music Season' was first started in 1927. Some Sabhas like Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha, Madras Music Academy, Tamil Isai Sangam, and Indian Fine Arts have contributed a lot to the Margazhi Kucheri initially. Later on, other sabhas also joined and contributed to the success of 'December Music Season'. It was not only Carnatic music that attracted huge audiences; Harikatha and Bhakthi Music also played an important role. Dance shows had

Bharatanatyam performances by extra ordinary performers like T. Balasarawathi, the Travancore sisters, Kumari Kamala and Vyjayanthimala Bali, that steals the show. Even traditional folk dances and musics are also performed in order to nurture and popularise them.



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The ardent love for music has been increasing and nowadays kutcheris are conducted even in open gardens, streets, railway stations and such public places to make even common people enjoy the essence of music. Even eminent musicians play a vital role in passing on the core of music to commonest of the people.

The Margazhi Katcheri evolves into a bigger event every year, attracting huge audience and gaining more and more popularity. The credit goes to the sabhas, musicians, music teachers, dancers, technicians and event organizers who contribute in making this event a globally successful one. It gives immense happiness and pride in getting such a global UNESCO recognition for our traditional music festival. It is one of the unique things of Chennai that every Chennaiites, can be really proud of!

